

Message Text

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PAGE 01 SANA 02453 031549Z

17

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 IO-10

OMB-01 EUR-12 ACDA-05 SAM-01 SAJ-01 AID-05 MC-02

SAB-01 TRSE-00 EB-07 /102 W
----- 075808

R 030940Z SEP 75

FM AMEMBASSY SANA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6278

INFO AMEMBASSY JIDDA

USCINCEUR

C O N F I D E N T I A L SANA 2453

EO11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, MASS, YE, SA

SUBJECT: YAR-SAUDI ARMS TALKS

REF: SANA 2289, USDAO SANA 175 DTD 24 AUG

1. SUMMARY: YAR-SAUDI ARMS TALKS AGAIN POSTPONED, THIS TIME TO END OF RAMADAN. LIFE OF SOVIET MILITARY MISSION TO YAR HAS ACCORDINGLY BEEN EXTENDED FOR AN UNCERTAIN PERIOD.

2. DURING SEPT 2 MEETING MIN OF STATE AHMAD ABDU SAID INFORMED DCM RANSOM AND ME THAT YAR DEPUTY COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF AND CHIEF OF STAFF AHMED AL-GHASHMI WILL NOT RPT NOT TRAVEL TO SAUDI ARABIA FOR ARMS TALKS UNTIL AFTER MONTH OF RAMADAN (WHICH STARTS APPROX 4 SEPT.)

3. IN EARLIER MEETINGS (SEE REFTELS) GHASHMI TOLD DCM AND DATT THAT HE EXPECTED TO BE IN SAUDI ARABIA FOR ARMS TALKS BY END OF AUGUST OR BEGINNING OF SEPTEMBER. PRESIDENT HAMDY WENT INSTEAD, HOWEVER, AND HAS
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 SANA 02453 031549Z

NOW RETURNED TO YEMEN. ACCORDING TO SAID, HAMDY

DID NOT DISCUSS ANY SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES DURING HIS VISIT INCLUDING QUESTION OF ARMS. HAMDI DECIDED PROTOCOL VISIT NOT APPROPRIATE TIME BRING UP SUCH ISSUES PARTICULARLY SO SOON AFTER YARG PRIMIN'S TRIP TO RIYADH.

4. NEITHER GHASHMI NOR AHMED SAID APPEAR AT ALL CONCERNED BY THE POSTPONEMENT. SAID IN FACT SAYS POSTPONEMENT CAME AT INITIATIVE OF PRESIDENT HAMDI. SAID CONFIRMED THAT MEANWHILE THE SAUDIS HAVE TOLD YAR THEY READY TO TALK.

COMMENT: WHATEVER PLANS MIGHT HAVE EXISTED TO ANNOUNCE DEPARTURE OF 114 MAN RUSSIAN MILITARY MISSION FROM YEMEN ON 26 SEPTEMBER HAVE CERTAINLY EVAPORATED WITH THIS MOST RECENT POSTPONEMENT OF SAUDI-YAR TALKS ABOUT ARMS SALES. AS GHASHMI ONCE SAID, YEMEN WILL NOT "TEAR DOWN ONE HOUSE BEFORE THEY CAN MOVE INTO ANOTHER". AHMED SAID CONFIRMED THIS IN TALK LAST NIGHT, SAYING THAT WHILE DECISION HAD BEEN TAKEN IN PRINCIPLE BY YAR TO DISMISS ADVISORS, YAR LEADERSHIP HAD NOT YET DECIDED WHEN AND HOW TO DO IT. SAID CLAIMED THAT SAUDIS NOT RPT NOT PUSHING EXPULSION AS CONDITION OF AID BUT THEIR DEPARTURE WAS "UNDERSTOOD". SAID BELIEVES THIS SHOULD BE DONE QUIETLY AND WITHOUT EMBARRASNMENT.

5. DON'T KNOW EXACT REASON FOR THIS LATEST POSTPONEMENT. EXPLANATION MAY BE SIMPLE ONE OFFERED BY SAUDI CHARGE IN SANA: "RAMADAN IS NOT A GOOD TIME TO CONDUCT BUSINESS IN SAUDI ARABIA". REPORT THAT POSTPONEMENT CAME AT YAR INITIATIVE SEEMS STRANGE CONSIDERING URGENCY AND IMPORTANCE WHICH LEADERS IP IN SANA ATTACHES TO FUNDING OF NEW WEAPONS FROM NON-SOVIET SOURCES.

IT MAY BE THAT YAR WANTS SOMEONE BESIDES GHASHMI TO GO. HE IS NOT AS BRIGHT AS HE IS LOYAL, AND THERE HAVE BEEN REPORTS THAT GHASHMI MAY BE ON SKIDS. MORE THAN LIKELY, HOWEVER, POSTPONEMENT MAY DERIVE FROM HAMDI'S SENSE OF TIMING, AS WELL AS HIS DESIRE TO DEAL WITH THE SAUDIS TACTFULLY. HE
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 SANA 02453 031549Z

CLEARLY WANTS TO ENCOURAGE A NEW SAUDI ATTITUDE OF RESPECT FOR YEMEN AS WELL AS SUPPORT FOR HIS REGIME. BY PREVIOUSLY REDUCING

INFLATED YARG DEMANDS FOR ECONOMIC FUNDS, INTER ALIA, HE HAS APPARENTLY

ALREADY IMPRESSED THE SAUDI LEADERSHIP.
SCOTES

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MILITARY ASSISTANCE, ARMS, NEGOTIATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 03 SEP 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: buchant0
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975SANA02453
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750304-0784
From: SANA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750988/aaaadaco.tel
Line Count: 114
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 SANA 2289, 75 SANA 175
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: buchant0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 19 AUG 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <19 AUG 2003 by KelleyW0>; APPROVED <29 DEC 2003 by buchant0>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: YAR-SAUDI ARMS TALKS
TAGS: PINT, MASS, YE, SA
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006